



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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In the children there is a wonderful force of uniting and joining. Even he whose critical mind disdains the highest powers of life, is unable to resist the innocence of childhood. As an instance, the lecturer mentioned a remembrance from his pastorship. Once he was summoned to go to a dying man, well known as indifferent to, or an enemy of Creed. At his bed he found the man's former nurse with her little daughter of eight years. When they had spoken awhile about religious matters, the little one burst out: "This evening at eight o'clock when going to bed I shall pray for thy soul." The words of the little girl deeply impressed the dying man and when the evening, his last, came, his mind was opened and he sought force and consolation from above.

The scripture gives us many a good advice in regard of education. Solomon describes the good and hearty wife, centre and pillar of the house, on other pages we find warnings against idleness and fancy of dress. The story of Jesus as a boy of twelve years is also important. On the whole scripture sets up as scope and ideal of education: Man, made in God's image, is to develop this likeness by doing as Jesus in his Father's work. And a greater and nobler ideal than that given by Jesus in His word and work never has been seen, this fact is granted as well by those who believe in God as by their antagonists. But to realize this ideal, there is need of mutual support of all educational powers, especially of home and school. Rev. Mr. Krag's interesting and thoughtful address opened an animated discussion. Mr. Banzert laid great stress on the harmony of home and school. It was a sad thing, that young people nowadays often neglected their homes. Rev. Petersen and Principal Miss Jeppesen laid great weight on a religious fundament of the home life; Miss Rudolph, board school teacher, and Mrs. Hedevig Bagger mentioned the development of the child's will. Rev. Mr. Krag emphasized that all religious training ought to be real, and founded in real life, not only in dogmatic sentences. Some of the audience discussed the best ways for educational purposes, and finally Mr. Bagger, headmaster of the school of Istedgare, reminded of Froebel as the great student of childhood, setting as the highest educational aim *Man's Godlikeness*.

BOOKS.

Historical Survey of Pre-Christian Education, by S. S. Laurie, A.M., LL.D., Second Edition (Longmans, 7/6). Professor Laurie has, in this book, done what should prove a fundamental service to the cause of Education, and has produced a deeply interesting volume. We say a fundamental service, because he recognises at the outset that the difficulty of his subject lies in giving expression within the limits of a few pages "to the religious and ethical attitude of the various nations of antiquity to life and its duties." These are golden words. A definition of education and a scheme of education which is the expression of the religious and ethical attitude of a nation towards life and its duties strikes us as a counsel of perfection and an indication rather of what we, to-day, lack, than of what we possess.

But probably we are too near to the working of our own systems to be able to judge of their value. At any rate the nations of antiquity, of

whose educational thought and practice Professor Laurie gives us an historical survey, appear, most distinctly, to work out their religious and ethical conceptions of life in their theory and practice of education. Perhaps this correspondence was less evident to the persons who worked it out; but, with every allowance for the rounding effect of time and distance, it remains, that while ancient education was before all things religious, however corrupt and defective the religion on which it was based, modern education tends to be before all things secular, religion being at the best a by-issue and not the foundation and guiding principle of the whole.

"By education," says Professor Laurie, "I understand the means which a nation with more or less consciousness takes for bringing up its citizens to maintain the traditional national character, and for promoting the welfare of the whole as an organized ethical community." From this standpoint the author surveys the education of the Hamitic Races, the Semitic Races, the Turanian Races, and the Aryan or Indo-European Races, including under the last Hindus, Medo-Persians, Hellenes and Italians.

We have only space for an extract here and there, illustrating the most interesting contents of the several divisions of Professor Laurie's work. Here is a good counsel from the educational thought of the Jews. "Brevity in imparting was held to be an indispensable quality of the teacher. He should be concise and make use of few words. That which could be told in one word should not be imparted in three."

The chapter on Chinese education deserves our careful consideration, for are not we too a much-examined people, though happily not so much so but that it takes away one's breath to hear of 10,000 persons within the enclosure of the examination building in a great centre like Canton. "Hard and successful study alone enables a Chinese to set foot on the lowest step of the official ladder, and a long and unusually successful career is necessary to enable him to reach the higher rounds." A curriculum of reading for thirty years is not unknown. The author's survey of the philosophy of which this educational grind is the outcome, is very interesting. "Knowledge is virtue," say the Chinese, therefore they get knowledge. Do not we also believe that education consists of knowledge, and is to be the saving of mankind? We are more familiar with the Hellenic and Roman philosophies of life, and consequent schemes of education, but the chapters treating of these afford most instructive reading, and the whole volume should perhaps lead us to question ourselves gravely as to whether our education is heterogeneous and casual, because at the present moment we hold no generally recognised philosophy of life, and therefore, of education.

The Springs of Character, by A. T. Schofield, M.D., author of *The Unconscious Mind* (Hodder & Stoughton, 3/6). Dr. Schofield's book will, we believe, accomplish the object for which it was written; it will give us pause, cause us to "think on these things." The author tells us that his object was threefold; first, "to emphasise in various ways the transcendent importance of character, second, to show what are its foundations and springs, and, third, to see how it can best be cultivated and improved."

The chapters deal with *Character and the Mind, The Personality of Character, Character and the Body, Character and Ethics, Character and Heredity, Character and Habit, Character and Growth, Analysis of Character, The Qualities of Character, Character and the Will, Character and Conduct, Character and Conscience, Character and Christianity, Character and Destiny*. These are all matters which come home to every man's business and bosom and appeal especially to those whose work in life it is to modify, direct, retrieve, sustain, and in every direct and indirect way labour towards the achievement of character in weak and dependent beings, that is to say, to parents. The reader will find that Dr. Schofield's book does him, in almost every page, a twofold service—it stimulates him and instructs him. It shows him how great an achievement and possession is character: "*Our minds cast shadows* just like our bodies, and daily and hourly those shadows are falling upon others for good or evil. This one fact alone proclaims the overwhelming importance of character in social life. The reason we feel one man's presence and not another's is, indeed, as simple and unerring as the law of gravity. A presence is felt in exact proportion to the strength of its character." "Oh! Job, how did you know Hercules was a God? Because I was content the moment my eyes fell on him—he conquered whether he stood or walked or sat." "Men of character," says Emerson, "are the conscience of the society to which they belong, and to produce all this effect no word need be spoken, no deed done—the presence often suffices." "In silent company with another," says Maeterlinck, "the character is often deeply formed. The truth cannot often be uttered in words, but it can be learnt in silence." This kind of writing is stimulating. We say to ourselves, "get character," and, again, before all things, "get character." Having stimulated us, Dr. Schofield proceeds to instruct us. Character, he tells us, is not to be attained by introspective methods, but by the pursuit of ideals. "The measure of a man is truly the measure of his vision, that is, of the ideal before his eye." Again,—"Loss of faith in ideals is destructive of character and stops its growth. Moreover an ideal not followed is soon lost." Again,—"We have little idea how character develops by the pressure of moral opinions and current thoughts. One single hint or new idea may influence an entire character." Again,—"Schopenhauer traces some bad characters to the effect of the single idea of regarding the world as 'not myself' and all good as centering in the unextended *ego*." We have not space to estimate severally chapters dealing with matters of such exceeding weight, but we hope we have said enough to direct the reader's attention to Dr. Schofield's valuable work, in which he will find, as we have said, such stimulation and such suggestion as should make him desire "character" before all things, and should enable him to set about the intelligent production of that which he desires.

The Beloved Son: The Story of Jesus Christ told to Children, by Mrs. Francis Rye (Heinemann, 2/6). Mrs. Rye has performed a difficult task with wise insight and perfect reverence. *The Beloved Son* is a beautiful little book, not by any means written down to children, and yet written in a style whose seriousness and simplicity should appeal to every intelligent child. The table of contents will give some idea of the scope

of the work. The chapters treat of *Christmas Day, The Wonderful Things He did, The Beautiful Stories He told, His Ways with children, Some of the Things Jesus taught the People, The Last Days of Jesus, The Painful Death He died, How in the end He won*. The teaching of our Lord is presented with just that living touch that is so often missed. For example,—“He told them that those who were content to have nothing in this world had for their own the Kingdom of Heaven, and that those whose lives were meek and gentle won their way on earth. That the people who were made sad by sin and by the sorrow of the world were those whom God himself comforted. That the longing to be better and holier was a noble feeling and would be fully satisfied.” We should not like to think that any other book were used *instead* of the Gospel stories as told in the Gospels themselves, but many teachers and parents have felt the need of supplementary help, something that should bring the whole Gospel story into focus, as it were, and should afford a key to the direct teaching of our Lord. We think this is just the book for parents to read to their children.

The Children's Quarterly (P.N.E.U. Office, 6d., quarterly), is better than ever; every P.N.E.U. child should take it in. Especially do we endorse “Aunt Mai's” advice to her nephews and nieces about the “*Portfolio of Paintings*.” The studies set for this quarter are very charming, and we believe that the members of “Aunt Mai's” Art Club should do them well.

THE "P.R." LETTER BAG.

[The Editor is not responsible for the opinions of Correspondents.]

DEAR EDITOR,—The article on the “Dangers and Difficulties of Child Study” interested me deeply. The lecturer made one remark which I am sure would have been put in a different way had she attended the meeting at the P.N.E.U. Conference on May 8th, at which the subject of Children's Country Holidays was discussed, and Mr. Ernest Hart gave particulars of the splendid help which some of our young people give to town children by taking them for walks and teaching them natural history. She would not speak as she does of the “luckless little Londoner, who cannot have a peaceful fortnight in the country without an examination at the end of it,” if she knew how they hang in groups in the lanes, longing for the shops and scenes of excitement which are “home” to them, and begging passers and by to “give I some'ut to do.” If more workers in this great and growing harvest could be found, would not a few simple questions at school on their return on what they have seen prolong the break of school routine, and remind them of the happy days spent in looking at nature with eyes less absolutely closed than they are at present? It is a work which, in my opinion, P.N.E.U. parents should do all they can to induce their young people to take part in. Much may also be done by sending boxes of specimens up to London for botany lessons.

Yours truly, M. L. HART DAVIS.

Dunsden Vicarage, Reading, Dec. 15th, 1900.